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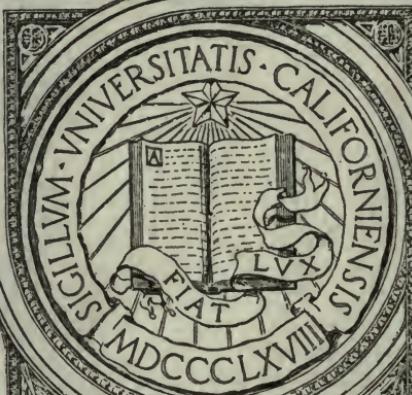
AN EPILOGUE
AND OTHER POEMS
BY SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN

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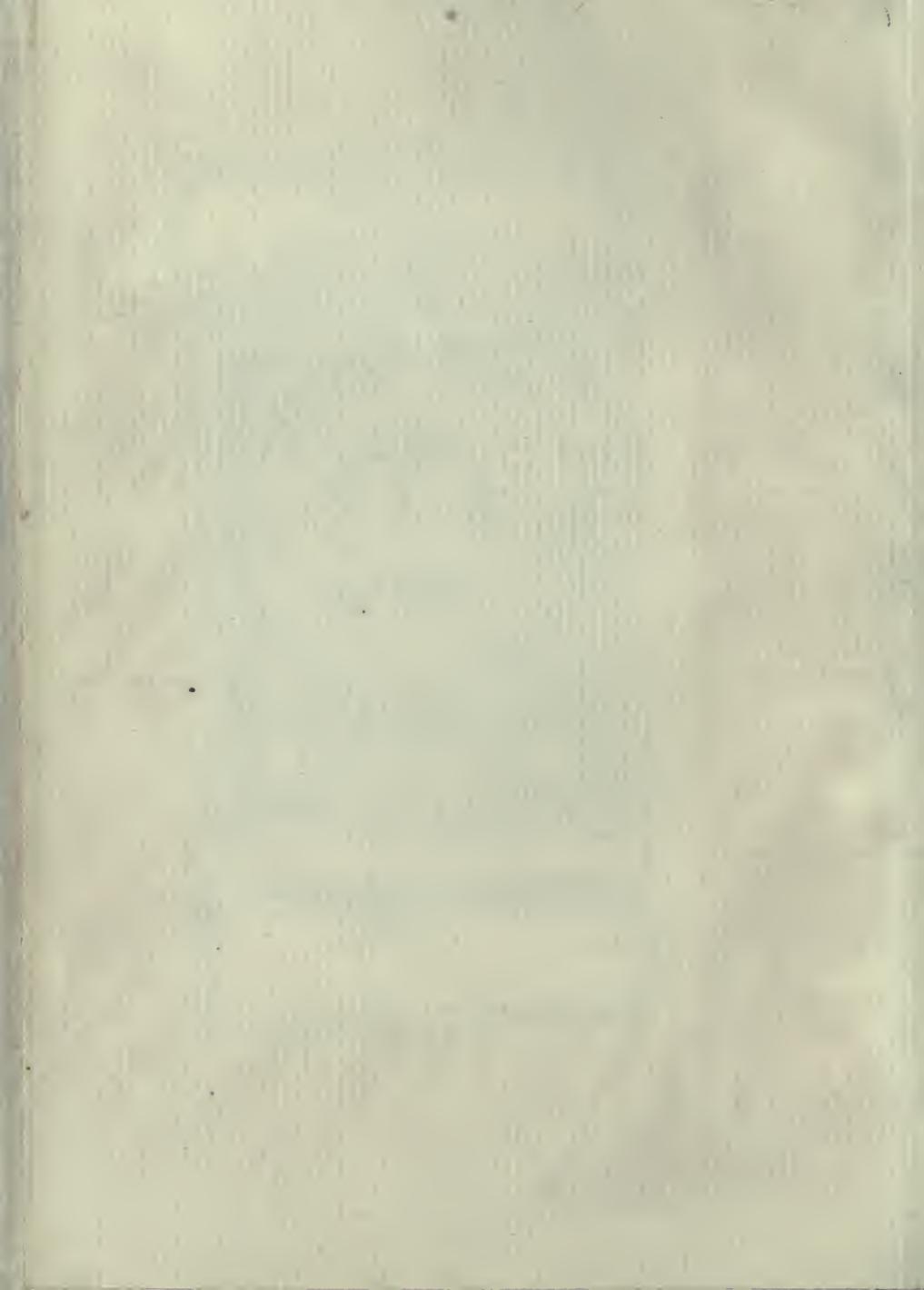


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AN EPILOGUE
AND OTHER POEMS

BY THE SAME WRITER

NEW SONGS (in collaboration)	1904
THE TWILIGHT PEOPLE	1905
VERSES SACRED AND PROFANE	1908
THE EARTH LOVER	1909
SELECTED LYRICS, with a Preface by A.E. (Mosher)	1910

The above volumes are out of print in the original form (except "New Songs"), but nearly all the poems have been included in the volume "Poems," published in 1912.

IMPRESSIONS, being a Selection from the Note-books of the late J. H. Orwell, with a Foreword by Seumas O'Sullivan	1910
(Out of print.)	
POEMS, collected edition, with por- trait	1912
BOOK NOTICES, a volume of prose (in preparation).	

AN EPILOGUE
TO THE PRAISE OF ANGUS
AND OTHER POEMS
BY SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN, *poem*

James Starkie

MAUNSEL AND CO., LTD.
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CONTENTS

AN EPILOGUE TO "THE PRAISE OF ANGUS"	1
FROM A VERSE EPISTLE	7
THE OTHERS	9
AT THE CONCERT	12
A CURSE	13
CREDO	15
THE RAINBOW	19
RAIN	20
THE RAGMAN	21
WISDOM	23
1630	26
THE OTHER THIEF	27
MANTRAM	29

AN EPILOGUE TO
“THE PRAISE OF ANGUS”

I

I CAN but wrong with the faltering
word I speak,
This your grace that is guerdon of all
my days;
Not yours the giving or holding the love I
seek,
It is the guerdon of all who sing the praise
Of beauty that goes with fulness of beauty
meek;
Sweet, as above the tangle of earth's vain
ways;
Holy, remote heaven's blue unmoved endures
Over the babble of earth's vain singers of
praise
Reigns serene the silence and this be yours.

II

REMOTE as stars, and for a moment's
space
Your eyes that were the light
Of my brief life, shone to me through the
gloom
And I as still as death
Sat with averted sight
And heard your voice, soft in the shaded
room,
And saw the roses moving on your breast,
The slender fern ends stir with the warm
breath
That used to falter when my lips were pressed
Blotting the world out on your parted lips,
Fearing lest some chance look or word
Scarce heeded, or half heard
Should bring a swift return
Of that keen scorn,
Even so some lone unbodied wanderer
Whom sheltering night and dark awhile
released,
From his sad ways,

AN EPILOGUE

Might with brief longing feast
His earth-denied sad eyes
On living forms and things of happier days,
Might with brief yearning gaze,
On loved remembered lips and eyes and hair,
In fearful silence, lest some ray
Stirring his dark secure of sad eclipse
Herald approaching light and sundering day.

AN EPILOGUE

III

S PLENDID and terrible your love,
The searing pinions of its flight
Flamed but a moment's space above
The place where ancient memories keep
Their quiet, and the dreaming deep
Stirred only with a troubled light,
And that old memory woke and stirred
Out of its sleep.

Splendid and terrible your love,
I hold it to me like a flame,
I hold it like a flame above
The empty anguish of my breast;
There let it stay, there let it rest
Deep in the heart whereto it came,
Of old as some wind-wearied bird
Drops to its nest.

AN EPILOGUE

IV

SO once again you leave me once again,
Your noble silence shames my wrong-
ing thought,
And all the doubts and vain imaginings
wrought

In the dim ways of this love-wildered brain.
So the last sands run out, yet this I pray,
As to the unremembered I go down,
You date our friendship from a happier day,
E'er yet some fateful nothing could surprise,
And darken that brave glory of your eyes,
The hope that sits your forehead like a
crown,

On the long, slow, sweet dawn our loving
had

Thinking, the dark will not prevail with
you,

And all these sadder times seem but a few,
Dark things imagined when your heart was
sad.

AN EPILOGUE

V

SLOWLY they crowd, memories on
memories
Before these heavy eyes
Like doomed Siberian exiles, a long file
Slow moving, with bowed heads disconsolate,
Toward the far gray places
Turning their grayer faces
And bearing with them into their exile,
Bearing each one upon his bowed
Unconscious shoulders the small load
Of all that yet survives
From their sad lives
Of light, and love, and living man's estate.
Even so they pass me by
To the last straggling memory, and I,
I too must take on my outwearied back
My wretched out-worn pack,
Joys, hopes, and loves, and with the silent
band,
Set out in turn toward the wintry land.

FROM A VERSE EPISTLE

THIS is the path that once you trod
with me,
The path that winds through heather
to the sea ;
By the tall cliffs where the long arms of light
Hang wavering above the silent night,
And touch with pale gold fingers the cliffs'
edge,
Or rest a moment on the rocky ledge
Where sea birds nestle: but a year ago
We walked together here, and seemed to
know,
In night and all its starry company,
Our fellow travellers to eternity.

And now that night disowns nor seems to
send
The silence that of old time hailed me friend,
Perhaps because I thought of that old rhyme,
I thought to send you in a happier time,
And hidden now in the dim mist that brings
The veil of sanctity to common things :

FROM A VERSE EPISTLE

Oh, friend, I know that some adventure lies
Beyond the questing of adventurous eyes
Some subtle and sweet conquest, and more
fair,

Kept only for the heart whereon despair
Has spread the calm of all monotonous things,
Day on sad day, night after night whose
wings,

Once flaming can no longer hide away
The unlitten interstices of day to day,
Subtle with all strange savours and more fair,
Than any conquest of the fuller air,
Being compact of joy in memory
And anguish hushed in sad serenity,
When the purposeless days like sheep in
endless rout

Creep past, and life, a flame in the sun,
burns out.

When you are old and I am long since dead,
Finding in your deep heart the very best
That could be said of such a one you'll say,
“He was my friend, and in his earlier day
He had his vision, the Gods give him rest.”

THE OTHERS

FROM our hidden places
By a secret path
We troop in the moonlight
To the edge of the green rath.

There the night through
We take our pleasure
Dancing to such a measure
As earth never knew.

To song and dance
And lilt without a name
So sweetly breathéd
'Twould put a bird to shame.

And many a young maiden
Is there of mortal birth
Her young eyes laden
With dreams of earth.

THE OTHERS

And many a youth entrancéd
Moves slowly in the wildered
round,
His brave lost feet enchanted
In the rhythm of elfin sound.

Music so forest wild
And piercing sweet would bring
Silence on blackbirds singing
Their best in the ear of Spring.

And now they pause in their
dancing
And look with troubled eyes
Earth's straying children
With sudden memory wise.

They pause, and their eyes in the
moonlight
With faery wisdom cold,
Grow dim and a thought goes
fluttering
In hearts no longer old.

THE OTHERS

And then the dream forsakes them
And sighing, they turn anew
As the whispering music takes them
To the dance of the elfin crew.

Oh, many a thrush and a blackbird
Would fall to the dewy ground
And pine away in silence
For envy of such a sound.

So the night through
In our sad pleasure
We dance to many a measure
That earth never knew.

AT THE CONCERT

DOWN in the valley full at ease
I lay and laughed my fill,
While all about, like hawks at
poise
Their giddy souls hung still.

“ They seek in empty ways above
Where tenuous winds have trod,
Nor know the rivers that make glad
The city of our God.”

I knew the rugged forehead’s might,
The deep-set eyes where burned
The light where-to a foolish world,
Uncomprehending, turned.

Then thunderous silence crept apace
Across the soundless years,
And through the sobbing laughter
flashed
The lightning of his tears.

A CURSE

MY curse upon all women, yesterday
I had the right to name you as my
friend,

And now because a woman looked my way
And spoke to me of love, I put an end
To something I had held more dear than all
That lies beneath a bosom's rise and fall:
And you are set with all the sad, betrayed,
Denied, forsaken ones, and I am made
For evermore one of the crowd who mock,
Although your path were set by Calvary.
Even now across the trees beyond the lawn
Came clear and horrid through the gray of
dawn
Where sea-birds screamed, the crowing of a
cock,
And with it came across the years between
Peter's denial and the curse obscene.

A CURSE

Lo ! player of a baser Judas part,
Denier with a less than Peter's heart,
Look on me, friend, then turn away from me
Nor think of one who in the deeps of hell
Burns with this thought, that once you loved
him well.

CREDO

I CANNOT pray, as Christians use to
pray,
Before the holy Rood,
Nor on the sacred mysteries seven, as they,
Believing brood.

Nor can I say with those whom pride makes
sure,
Our hearts emancipate
Have scorn of ancient symbols that endure
Out-lasting late.

For I have seen Lord Angus in the trees,
And bowing heard
When Spring a lover whispered in their
leaves
The living word.

CREDO

Have known the sun, the wind's sweet agency
And the soft rains that bless
And lead the year through coloured
pageantry
To fruitfulness.

Yea, by the outstretched hands, the dimming
sight,
The piercéd side,
Known when in every bough that shrinks
from light
The Lord of life has died.

ULLABY

HUSHEEN the herons are crying
Away in the rain and the sleet,
Flying and flying and flying
With never a rest to their feet.

But warm in your coverlet nestle,
Wee bird, till the dawn of the day,
Nor dream of the wild wings that wrestle
In the night and the rain and the gray.

Come, sweetheart, the bright ones would
bring you
By the magical meadows and streams,
With the light of your dreaming they build
you
A house on the hill of your dreams.

ULLABY

But you stir in your sleep and you murmur,
As though the wild rain and the gray
Wet hills with the winds ever blowing
Had driven your dreams away.

And dearer the wind in its crying,
And the secrets the wet hills hold,
Than the goldenest place they could find you
In the heart of a country of gold.

THE RAINBOW

(DONEGAL)

OVER the blue waves
By golden sands
sheltered,
A ship came sailing
To the far faint headland,
A galley all magical
From far Hy-Brazil,
Merchant-men sailed her
With bales of colour ;
I saw her surely
Off the faint coast anchoring,
Saw them unloading
All their glowing cargoes
Spread them for viewing.
Thereafter departing,
Sail away in the sunset
Leaving behind them
(Paid for in golden light)
Wonder wrought vestures,
Soft green and emerald glowing,
Spread on the faint headland.

RAIN

(DONEGAL)

A LL day long
The gray rain beating,
On the bare hills
Where the scant grass cannot cover,
The gray rocks peeping
Through the salt herbage.
All day long
The young lambs bleating
Stand for covering
Where the scant grass is
Under the gray wall,
Or seeking softer shelter
Under tattered fleeces
Nuzzle the warm udders.
All day long
The little waves leaping
Round the gray rocks
By the brown tide borders,
Round the black headlands
Streaming with rain.

THE RAGMAN

A COMMON ragman, through the day
I drag my weary feet
And wheel my clattering truck of
toys
Through many a noisy street.

And further still by silent squares
That ancient quiet loves,
Until God's breath upon the deep
Of purple evening moves.

And still as arch and doorway ring
With my accustomed cries
The bartering human children bring
Their fluttering merchandize.

Splendid with many a shape and hue
In pageant brave arrayed,
A sudden rainbow on the dusk
Of pearly shadows sprayed.

THE RAGMAN

And evermore I give for these
That eager hands have brought,
An idle fancy gaily deckt
The windmill of a thought.

WISDOM

WHAT memories have the ever-murmuring leaves
And mossy paths of these green sheltered ways,
But they keep all their wisdom guarded well,
And he who seeks them, save with seeing eyes
Seeing as children see, and with a heart
That has drunk deep of quietness, for sure
Will garner little but the looks of things
And silence in their myriad voicéd ways.
Yet they are kind, these woods, and often-times
Into sad hearts sickened of city ways
They send a whisper of their wisdom's store.
But such high courtesy I came to know
That in these mossy paths, of old, a king
Went wandering distraught, till he had made

WISDOM

Companions of the creatures of the woods,
For he was gentle in his melancholy
And with his kingly robes had laid aside
The things that veiled about his human
heart.
And therefore by his side the young birds
 played,
The squirrel crunched his acorns, and the
 deer
Stood dreaming their mild day-dreams un-
 dismayed.
And so he gathered knowledge by degrees,
For quaint, old-hearted forest presences
Came to him unafraid from their dim haunts,
And taught him wisdom underneath the
 boughs
Of beech and oak ; and when at last his
 court
Came to him, deep within the evening
 woods,
With their pale cheeks and gold-glittering
 robes,
Beneath the bronze he felt his face burn red
And half he pitied them, and half himself,

WISDOM

For "these were once my counsellors,"
said he.

And yet he went with them and left the
woods

Gladly, to share the wisdom they had given,
For with their wisdom they had given him
love.

NA Y, Sweetheart, I am silent, as for
me
 Think as you will and wrong me
 as you please,
The lord I serve has scorn of bended knees,
I will not wrong the service of my lord
With vow or prayer, with look or whispered
 word,
Nor any of the things that weaklings use ;
Even as you have chosen it must be,
But you must tread alone the path you
 choose,
For you have made my very heart a door
Wide open ; so farewell—but this I say
Your love has had that heart's sincerest day ;
Would God I could defend you, even now,
From the false flattering look, the word,
 the vow,
Of the base service that would offer more.

THE OTHER THIEF

“ **I**N Paradise” then all was still,
Three voiceless shadows crowned the
hill,
But, as the dawn of darkness broke,
One raised his anguished head and spoke,
There is no justice in your God
Pale sufferer, for I have trod
Secure and glad on these long hills
That now th’ unwonted darkness fills,
Yea, life was passing sweet to me
On the long hills of Galilee
And death is bitterness ; but thou
Who but half lived with clouded brow,
Whose every word and deed was wrought
By the grave passion of thy thought
To wrong of life’s supreme design,
Men have miscalléd thee divine
Who knew not life’s divinity,
Pale one, if thou had’st fared with me
A king by earth’s courtesy

THE OTHER THIEF

With all the world for conquest, then
Thou hadst deserved the name which men
Have, mocking, given ; but thine eyes
Were fixed on that far Paradise
So thou could'st never know how sweet
And fair the earth was, round thy feet.
There is no justice in your God,
Pale Christ, for I who, kingly, trod
The earth, and knew earth's royalty
Must leave it all and die with thee.

MANTRA

THE valley all a magic sea
Brimmed up with laughing
gold,
O guard you well that memory
Although your heart be cold.

The stream that murmured all the
spring
Beneath a widening sky ;
Keep well its littlest whispering
Although your heart be dry.

The light that stayed beneath the tree
Whose every leaf was shed,
Guard well its glowing memory
Although your heart be dead.

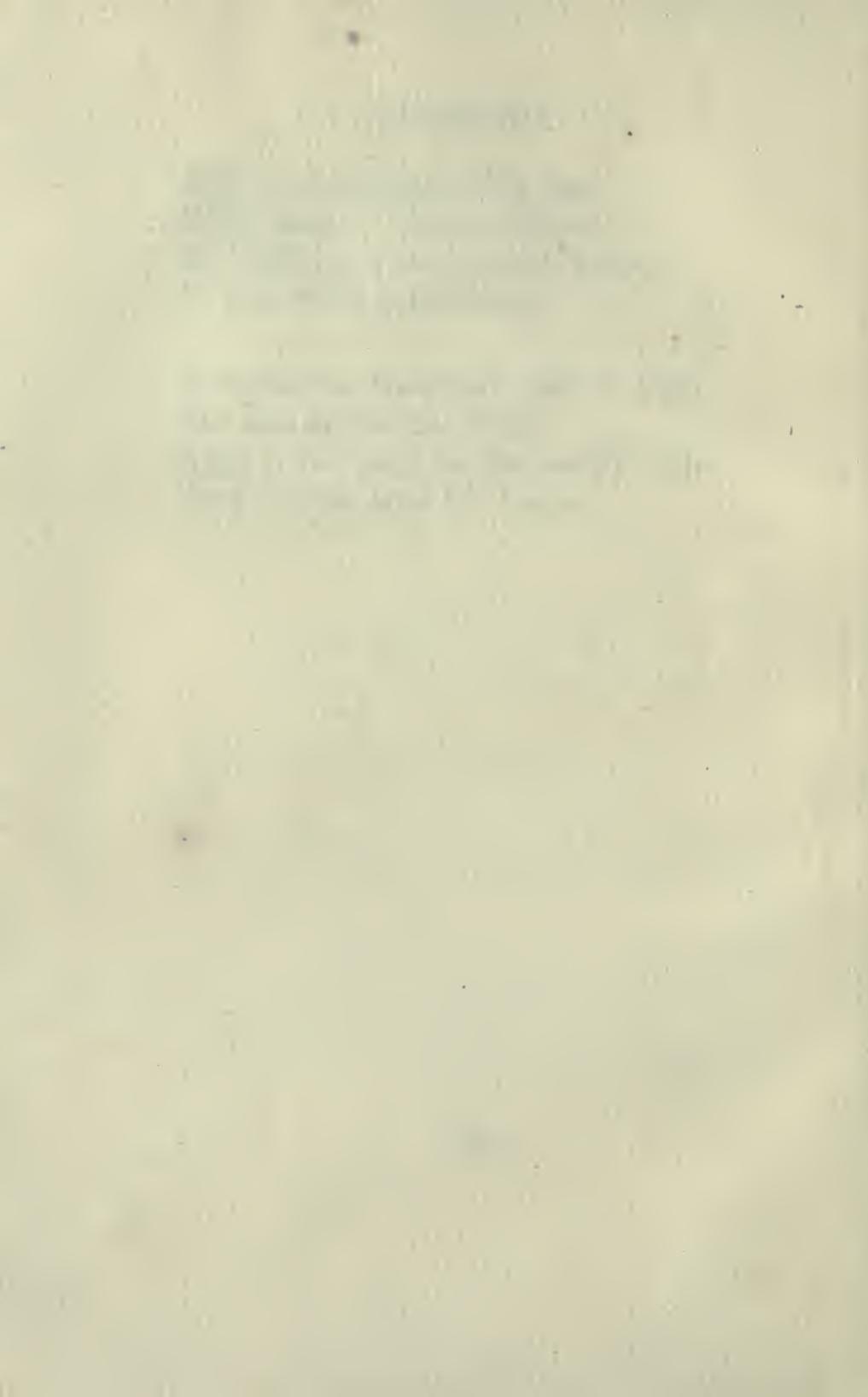
For but a little sound awakes
The heart to all unrest ;
The soul a little pathway takes
On some eternal quest.

MANTRA

And he is master of his fate
Who such a wisdom knows,
He will not hear an alien voice
In any wind that blows.

Toward the westward beacon light
He flies across the foam,
This is the path he knows by sight
And the far land his home.







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